

It's all in the family when it comes to development

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- Langan family finds many benefits to collaborating on projects.

For the Langans, collaborating on business projects could be considered a family pastime.

Three of the six [Wyckoff](#)-raised Langan children are working with their father, Bernie Langan, the president of BF Langan Consultants, on Riverwalk, a new 158-unit luxury rental community near the [Passaic River](#) in [Elmwood Park](#). They are Joseph, president of Elmwood Park's [River Drive Construction](#); Mary, principal architect of O'Neil Langan Architects of New York City; and Michael, partner at River Edge-based law firm Hartmann Doherty.

A 91-unit residential building, comprising the first phase of development, now stands at 400 Riverfront Blvd. The development's second building, three floors of residential rental units above a 17,000-square-foot retail space, is scheduled to be completed at 351 Riverfront Blvd. by fall 2013.

It's not the first time the family has worked together. Langan family members and their firms built the [Elmwood Park](#) headquarters for Bubble Wrap maker Sealed Air Corp. in 11 months, and they also collaborated on the construction of their parents' house in [Saddle River](#).

The Langans had varying roles in developing the [Elmwood Park](#) rental complex. Niles Bolton Associates of Atlanta was the architect, but the Langans primarily own the Riverfront Residential development company, whose stakeholders include managing member Bernie, his brother Kevin and his business associate George Siller. Joseph, whose company oversaw Riverwalk's construction, and Michael, whose firm did some of the legal work, are also members of the development company. Mary's firm helped design the interiors of the first building and the architecture and interiors for the second development phase.

As the Langans discussed their projects, they laughed and joked, which the family said is typical for business meetings. "As long as everything's going well," Bernie said. "But the projects have all gone well," he added.

Bernie Langan began developing property in [Elmwood Park](#) in the 1980s. He acquired about 10 acres there, and later purchased land from the state. While some of the Elmwood Park land was developed for offices, the Langans decided to build residential rentals when the economy turned.

Some tenants have already begun moving into [Elmwood Park](#) market-rate units. Eleven acres of the Elmwood Park land remain to be developed, and the Langans agree that adapting to the economic climate is important. "We're not quite sure what the rest of the project will look like, but it's user driven," said Joseph.

'Great examples'

The Langan children grew up watching their father build his business, Langan Engineering, while their mother, Marian, took care of them. "They both were great examples to us," said Michael.

Mary said doing well in school was expected in the Langan household and she learned a strong work ethic from her family. Watching her father and seeing drawings of his work as an engineer on redeveloping the Jersey City northern waterfront while she was a teenager helped inspire her career path. And she learned from her father that "easy doesn't make it better," evidence of which was when the family built a half dome for her parents' home even though an engineer explained that a full dome is easier to build.

At times, working with family means decisions can be more challenging, because everyone has an opinion, she said. But Mary, whose husband, Steven O'Neil, is also her business partner, noticed benefits when working with her family and their firms. "I know when I put something on the table, I'm going to get a true answer."

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